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# Picturing Autonomy: David Smith, Photography and Sculpture

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*The art would be to be able to feel homesick, even though one is at home. Expertness in the use of illusion is required for this. (Søren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, 1845, as quoted in Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, Convolute I, 1927–1940.)*

In 1953 David Smith hauled several of his recent sculptures down the hill from his studio to photograph them on a dock on Lake George, New York.<sup>1</sup> The sculptures – 7/29/53, Tanktotem III, and Tanktotem IV, completed that year – were large-scale constructions, each made of sheared ends of boiler tanks, welded iron rods, and other scraps or cuts of metal. Smith made eight photographs of the scene, arranging the works differently in each. In one, he frames the sculptures so that they overlap to form an abstract, cubic pattern of shapes that orders the view in the distance: the left-most object organizes a distant forested island, its iron rectangle miming the camera's frame (plate 1). A shallow depth of field accentuates the differences between sculpture and its blurred background. In another, the sculptor placed 7/29/53 on top of a pallet, blocking a view of it with Tanktotem IV; the two objects merge as one (plate 2). Off to the right, Tanktotem III is poised to move beyond the frame, only peripherally part of the group. Smith also introduced the insect-like sculpture *Bicycle* (1953) to the ensemble; its small size acts as a measure of scale.

In these lakeside photographs, Smith staged his sculptures in a pastoral setting to dramatize their anthropomorphism. With the exception of 7/29/53 in the second view, the sculptures resemble figures, standing directly on the dock's uneven planks without the support of pedestals, yet their spindly legs and disjointed torsos seem at odds with the generalized landscape around them.<sup>2</sup> The photographs frame a collision between sculpture and nature, where the result is unresolved. Are these structures meant as stand-ins for bodies enacting other lakeside activities – swimming, jumping, resting? Or are they welded frames, pieces of discarded tanks that together constitute a sculpture? In Smith's photographs this irresolution both animates and abstracts the work. It stirs up questions of figuration and abstraction, of belonging and place, all the better to show the sculptures' separateness from their surroundings. Photographing his works in 1953, Smith pictures sculpture as part of an alternative world.

Smith was a sculptor known for radically shifting the terms of a medium traditionally defined by casting, modelling, and carving. He was the first to make

**Detail from David Smith,  
*Photograph of Oculus (1947),  
Bolton Landing Dock, Lake  
George, NY, c. 1947 (plate 3).***

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**I David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) 7/9/53, Tanktotem III, and Tanktotem IV (all 1953), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1953. Gelatin silver print, 25.4 × 20.3 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.***



industrial welding a sustained technique for large-scale sculpture, elaborating on the constructions of Julio González and Pablo Picasso, which he saw in reproduction in a 1931 issue of *Cahiers d'Art*. In 1946 Clement Greenberg took note of Smith's achievement, calling him 'the best young sculptor in the country'.<sup>3</sup> In reviews and essays through the 1950s, the critic praised Smith's virtual use of welded line, which shaped 'empty space' to direct a pictorial illusion of matter.<sup>4</sup> In his use of industrial materials, the sculptor sought a renewed connection between art and modern industry, craft and steel – or as Anne M. Wagner observes, his sculptures archive 'what welding once achieved', preserving the obsolescence of industrial manufacture then in progress.<sup>5</sup> It was a relationship Smith also fashioned through his artistic identity as a sculptor-labourer, an artist who was skilled in factory welding. Indeed, one of Smith's most enduring contributions to the history of modernism was modelling how sculpture could actively account for industrial manufacturing.<sup>6</sup> As stock narratives have it, sculpture's relationship to industry changed in the second half of the twentieth century. Minimalists, including Richard Serra, Robert Morris, and Donald Judd,

took up and critiqued Smith's emphasis on welding by relying on industrial production. Their objects – which were newly situational, rejecting the pictorial qualities of Smith's sculpture – were professionally fabricated, not handmade by the artist's torch.<sup>7</sup>

The path describing Smith's contribution to the history of twentieth-century sculpture is well trod.<sup>8</sup> What is less known about the sculptor is his work across media, and his simultaneous use of photography to experiment with the perception of objects and space. Smith learned to take and develop photographs in the 1930s, and although he stopped developing his own images in the 1940s, he continued to use his camera as a representational medium until his death in an automobile accident in 1965. From the mid-1940s on, Smith took thousands of photographs of his sculptures and used them to promote his work. Taking the reins of the documentary process from photographers hired by his gallery, he photographed his objects in the landscape outside his studio in upstate New York, radically departing from the neutral backdrops, even lighting, and head-on



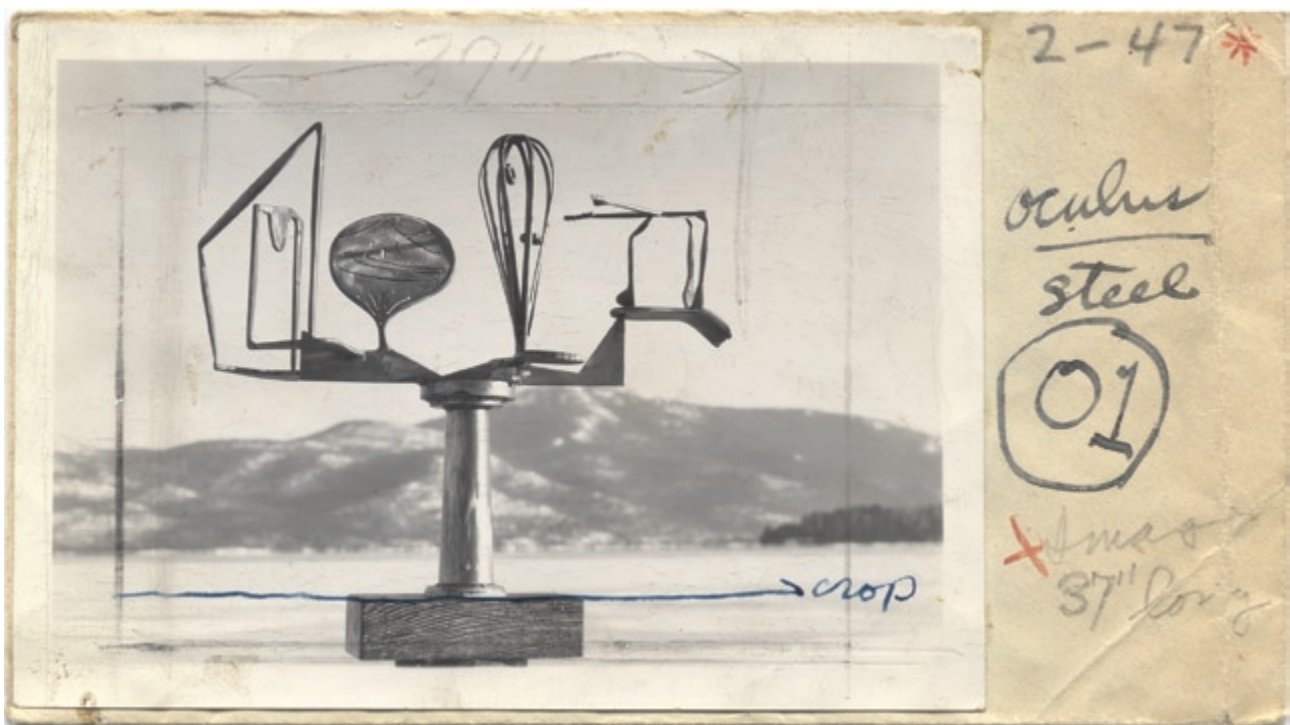
**2** David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) Bi-Cycle, 7/9/53, Tanktotem III, and Tanktotem IV (all 1953), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1953. Gelatin silver print, 25.4 × 20.3 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith, New York. © The Estate of David Smith/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.*

vantage points standardized by professional photographers. Smith sent his resulting photographs to critics, curators, dealers, editors and patrons; they were published in countless magazines, newspapers, journals and exhibition catalogues, often as anonymous illustrations of his sculptures. As early as 1947, Smith registered the power of photographic reproduction as a display for sculpture. 'Reproduction seems to act as first acquaintance and eliminate some of the barriers', he wrote to his dealer, persuading her to include additional illustrations in an upcoming catalogue.<sup>9</sup> Through photography, Smith could launch his sculptures into the public realm.

Since the 1940s, critics, curators, and art historians have used the sculptor's own photographs to illustrate their publications. As photographs consulted by authors to write their accounts, these images influenced some of the most enduring and significant accounts of his sculpture, by Greenberg, Frank O'Hara, Hilton Kramer, Rosalind Krauss and others. Yet until recently these photographs have been read as transparent documents of the sculptor's work; they have not been interrogated as mediating Smith's sculpture or staging a public display.<sup>10</sup> Smith's photographs are far from neutral, as they animate and pictorialize his welded steel sculptures using the camera's controls of vantage point and frame.

In this essay I explore how Smith crafted a photographic display for his objects that dramatized their autonomy or homelessness, a sense of the temporal and spatial dislocation which is deemed central to the discourse of modernism. His photographs exaggerated the siteless or 'nomadic' qualities of Smith's sculpture that Rosalind Krauss identified in her pivotal essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979).<sup>11</sup> Alex Potts has recently argued that qualities of autonomy are located not exclusively in the formal characteristics of the object itself, but are constituted by 'a display that induces a viewer to see [the object] as isolated from its surroundings and set in a sphere apart'.<sup>12</sup> Here I propose a

**3 David Smith, *Photograph of Oculus (1947), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1947.* Gelatin silver contact print and ink, 8.9 × 12.4 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.**



4 Pages 154 and 155 of Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, Cambridge, MA, 1977, illustrating two views of David Smith's *Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith, 1949–50* (photographs by David Smith). © Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press, and The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

that became a formal counterpart to what Smith saw as the essence of totemism itself. Thus the form of his work and the notion of the totem became two interlocking and reciprocal metaphors which pointed to the same thing: a statement about how the work could not be possessed.<sup>1</sup> To see how this operated one must turn first to what Smith understood as the structure of totemism, and then to the kind of formal expression with which it unfolded in his work.

In the sketchbooks from the 1930s, into which Smith entered notions for sculpture and cryptic expressions of the ideas which interested him, one finds drawings of objects labeled "totem" and references to psychoanalytic texts. Given Smith's interest in the work of Freud, it is probable that his view of totemism was drawn primarily from *Totem and Taboo*, a text that indistinctly tied primitive practices into the modern structure of relationships as they were described by psychoanalysis. For Smith, then, the totem was not an arboreal object. Rather, it was a powerfully abbreviated expression of a complex of feelings and desires which he felt to be operative in himself and within society as a whole.

Briefly, Freud described the way totemism operated within primitive cultures as a system to outlaw incest, by insuring that members of a given tribe or clan would not marry or cohabitize with each other, but would be forced to seek partners outside their own tribal families. Each tribe would identify itself with a particular totem object—usually an animal—and each tribe member would take on the name of that object so that men and totems were one. Once that identification was made, the laws that applied to the totem animal logically applied to the human bearer of its name. And these laws, the taboos, were mostly prohibitory, protecting the totem and making it inviolate. The totem was not only established as a sacred or venerated object; it was also set apart from all other objects that could be physically appropriated. Usually the chosen animal could not be killed or eaten, or even touched. For some tribes, the taboos extended as far as prohibiting a tribesman's approaching or even looking at the totem. Since the tribesmen and women carried the name of the totem as well, the laws of taboo,



118a and 118b. Smith: *Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith (two views)*, 1949–50. Steel and bronze, 40 1/2" x 47 1/2" x 21". © Estate of David Smith, New York.

154

by extension, applied to themselves, making incestuous union a direct violation of the tribal law. Freud saw in totemism the manifestation of a particular desire coupled with a system of preventing its consummation.

In Smith's eyes, this structuring of the relationship between two members of a set so that the appropriation or violation of the one by the other is outlawed became important during the 1930s for both personal and political reasons. World War II was raging, and Smith identified its carnage in the sexual and cannibalistic terms that made totemism suddenly relevant. What then began to take place within Smith's art was the formulation of a sculptural strategy to translate the taboos of totemism into a language of form. And the goal of this formal endeavor seems to have been to contrast the by-then established transactions between viewer and sculptural object, which, as we have seen, had developed into a system of either



155

new paradoxically intermedial account of modern sculptural autonomy which shows how qualities of homelessness and placelessness are built into Smith's photographic staging of sculpture, tied to how the sculptor envisioned his objects as contingent and unmoored. I extend Potts's definition of display to include photography by demonstrating how Smith and other modernists used the camera to imagine their objects as both tied to the familiar world and isolated or withdrawn. In Smith's hands, the camera – a tool that Walter Benjamin described as capable of 'bring[ing] things closer' – was a means to distance and dissociate his objects, imagining their disconnection.<sup>13</sup>

Smith staged his sculpture's separateness in two distinct ways: by either taking one-on-one shots of his sculptures, or photographing them clustered together in groups. Photographing individual works, he isolated them using low vantage points, cropping and a shallow focus. For instance, in a photograph of *Oculus* (1947, plate 3), Smith positioned his camera below the sculpture and cropped the photograph where the sculpture meets its base, as his notations indicate. The sculpture seems suspended above its backdrop, as if a free-floating linear form against a distant landscape. With its connection to place, base, and space cropped from view, *Oculus* is dislodged from its setting.

Smith took thousands of individual shots of his sculptures using this signature low vantage point and cropping technique, and he was keenly aware of how these tactics transformed his works. The acknowledgement came in a letter to his dealer Marian Willard, who had complained that in Smith's photograph, *Oculus* 'seems too disconnected from the base'.<sup>14</sup> Smith responded: '*Oculus* base [sic] was meant to be disconnected from the base [sic], hence the unusual elevation. The sculpture part takes place at eye level. The photo takes place under eye level.'<sup>15</sup> With these sentences – written about a sculpture whose title references the eye – Smith describes how his photographs elicit an encounter with his sculpture different from the embodied one that takes place 'at eye level'. Photography disconnects sculpture: rather than mime viewing-in-the-round, it reinvents sculpture in a

5 David Smith, *Photograph of Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith (1949–50)*, Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1950. Gelatin silver print, 25.4 × 20.3 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



compositional plane, using the camera as a pictorial device. Much like a pedestal or base, Smith's one-on-one photographs demarcate his objects as self-sufficient forms using vantage point, abrupt crop marks, and a shallow depth of field. His photographs cordon off the sculptural object from inhabited space, so that it seems withdrawn or distinct.

Smith's one-on-one photographs influenced Krauss's accounts of his sculpture's totemic or autonomous qualities. She used the artist's photographic archives, which the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery made available to her, to write her 1969 Harvard dissertation, expanded into a monograph, *Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith* (1971); a catalogue raisonné of Smith's work, which she compiled as part of her dissertation and published in 1977; and her chapter on his sculpture in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (1977).<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, Krauss, in her otherwise rigorous and insightful studies, did not address how Smith's photographs directed her readings of his sculpture.<sup>17</sup> The omission is particularly striking in her analysis of *Blackburn: Song of an Irish Blacksmith*, a work she argues exemplifies Smith's visual language of totemism and distinguishes his objects from constructivist sculptures by Naum Gabo and Ibram Lassaw, for instance, which rely on idealist modes of sculptural perception. *Blackburn*, Krauss writes in *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, structures 'a grammar of extreme visual disjunction', refusing viewers a stable and totalizing view.<sup>18</sup> Smith's sculpture, she argues, unfolds unpredictably in time and space in a sequence of irresolvable fronts. Seen from either view the sculpture's surfaces are unpredictable and opaque, and she describes how the work registers as two different things to ultimately refuse a viewer's possessive powers: the work remains autonomous. Krauss illustrated her argument with Smith's own photographs, both taken from a low vantage point (*plate 4* and *plate 5*). One view depicts the work as an elongated, open silhouette; the other presents it as a dense

knot of linear clusters. The two frames differ radically from each other, so that when viewed side by side they animate the disjunctive encounter of incongruous surfaces that Krauss described. The photographs direct a reading of the work as unresolvable.

Sculptures like *Blackburn* elicit an unstable spatial encounter when seen in the round – an encounter akin to the one Krauss described. Smith also photographically dramatized these qualities of elusiveness by deploying camera tactics so as to dislodge his sculptures from their setting. In photographs of works like *Oculus* or *Blackburn*, sculptures register as weightless pictorial forms that hover above the landscape. This presentation of sculpture as a pictorial form elides other aspects of his works – for instance, *Blackburn*'s materiality, or how, when seen close up, the dense puddles of welding material on the joints of the sculpture's different parts, the hatch marks on its cast bronze shape, and the shorn edges of pieces of cut metal come into view. These material facets of the work are obscured in the photographs, which envision the sculpture as a commanding silhouette. *Blackburn* is imagined to be distant and withdrawn thanks to the dramatic point of view.

Smith also animated a sense of the autonomy of his works in photographs of sculptures positioned in groups in the landscape, often assembling works from the same series for the camera. He published his group photographs alongside solo shots in exhibition catalogues, encouraging viewers to grasp the individuality of his objects, each one a unique thing, while also understanding how the sculptures were tied to a separate space of animate and otherworldly forms, distanced from the beholder.<sup>19</sup> In the photographs he made of his *Tanktotem* series on a dock – and in many other shots Smith took in the 1950s of his sculptures arranged in loose collectives – he used a pastoral setting to point to how his sculpture differed from its surroundings. By coordinating a set of tensions – between figural presence and abstract steel sculpture, between inhabited space and fabricated thing – the photographs raise questions about sculpture's place or home. They suggest a reading of sculpture both in and apart from its environment. Standing on the dock in an odd configuration, the *Tanktotems* are situated within a setting to which they also seem not to belong.

Smith's group photographs can be situated within a history of the photographic display of sculpture that includes works by modernists Constantin Brancusi, Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti and Louise Bourgeois, who each installed their objects in collectives, and photographed them or hired professional photographers to do so. These photographs inform a broader discussion about the staging of sculpture before 1965. Smith, like these other modernists, was invested in exploring uprightiness, fragmentation and scale. He was also participating in a dialogue about the relationship between figuration and abstraction, the solitary individual and the collective. By staging sculptures in groups, often directly on the ground, sculptors could activate and dramatize the resemblances and differences of their objects. Smith's photographs, read alongside other displays, question the role of sculptural figuration and belonging in a post-war world.<sup>20</sup>

#### **'Impassive idols of the machine age'**

In 1961 the poet and curator Frank O'Hara recounted a visit to Bolton Landing in an essay published in *Art News*, illustrated with Smith's own photographs. O'Hara noted how Smith had displayed his sculptures in the landscape in ways that seemed out of place:



Outside the studio huge piles of steel lay waiting to be used, and along the road up to the house a procession of new works, in various stages of painting, stood in the attitudes of some of Smith's characteristic titles: they stood there like a *Sentinel* or *Totem* or *Ziggurat*, not all menacing, but very aware. . . . The contrast between the sculptures and this rural scene is striking: to see a cow or pony in the same perspective as one of the *Ziggurats*, with the trees and mountains behind, is to find nature soft and art harsh; nature looks intimate and vulnerable, the sculptures powerful, indomitable. Smith's works in galleries have often looked rugged and in-the-American-grain, which indeed they are in some respects, but at Bolton Landing the sophistication of vision and means comes to the fore strongly. Earlier works, mounted on pedestals or stones about the terrace and garden, seem to partake of the physical atmosphere, but the recent works assert an authoritative presence over the panorama of mountains, divorced from nature by the insistence of their individual personalities, by the originality of their scale and the exclusion of specific references to natural forms.<sup>21</sup>

6 Ernst Scheidegger,  
*Photograph of Alberto  
Giacometti, L'Homme au  
Doigt (1947), on the street in  
front of the artist's studio, c.  
1950s. Gelatin silver print,  
dimensions unknown. Zurich:  
Estate of Ernst Scheidegger  
(1051). © 2013 Alberto  
Giacometti Estate/Licensed  
by VAGA and ARS, New York,  
NY. Photo: © Estate of Ernst  
Scheidegger, Zürich.*



As O'Hara's description suggests, to view Smith's sculpture against the 'panorama of mountains' was to see sculpture as a powerful, authoritarian presence: nature was 'soft' and art was 'harsh'. The self-sufficiency of the objects in scale and in reference created that effect. As if repelling the landscape, sculpture neither related to the landscape nor required it for its meaning; instead remaining distinct from it, refusing to belong to it. For O'Hara, Smith's fantasy of sculptural viewing both placed the object in the landscape and set it apart, like a sovereign power with dominion over its natural surroundings – not threatening, but 'very aware'.<sup>22</sup>

O'Hara's account describes how the sculptures he saw at Bolton Landing assert a commanding independence. Such qualities also resided in Smith's photographic stagings of his sculpture. *Oculus* is positioned above and against the blurry winter landscape behind it (see plate 3). *Blackburn* looms heroically above the soft contours of an Adirondack mountain range (see plate 5). These photographs celebrate welded steel sculpture as powerful forms, traits that are tied to how the photographs frame a pictorial encounter with sculpture that hinged on a series of opposing terms. Steel was juxtaposed with hill and forest; linear abstract form with open sky; the familiar with the alien; communal with singular; and present with absent. For Smith, the difference between these terms was the crux of his sculpture's modernism, allowing him to animate the deep otherness of his sculptures as dislocated from the here and now.

In his group photographs, Smith similarly used the landscape as a backdrop to enliven his objects. The environments varied, and the dock on Lake George was one of many incongruous settings that

7 David Smith, *Photograph of* (left to right) *Forging III* (1955), *Forging X* (1956), *The Iron Woman* (1954–58, unfinished), *Forging II* (1955), *Forging I* (1955), and *Man and Woman in the Cathedral* (1956, unfinished), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1956. Colour slide transparency, 6.2 × 6.2 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Smith chose. He photographed his sculptures on a frozen Lake George, covered in snow; on the dirt driveway leading to his studio; in the centre of a paved road; and in the fields outside his studio. Like Ernst Scheidegger's well-publicized 1950s photographs of Giacometti's standing figures in empty urban spaces, these photographs place sculptures in unexpected settings (plate 6).<sup>23</sup> Scheidegger chose city squares, the space between train tracks, a country path, and the edge of a quay to stage and frame Giacometti's work. In one, he pushed to an extreme the differences between the slender, upright figure, with its densely compacted surfaces, and a seemingly empty street through a shallow depth of field. The sculpture is both evocatively present and curiously detached, not belonging to its urban setting. Smith, by contrast, was drawn to the rural landscape to suggest the non-belonging of his sculptures, or how they seem displaced from inhabited, ordinary space.

Consider, for instance, a photograph Smith made of works from his Forgings series of 1955, which he presented alongside *The Iron Woman* (1954–58) and *Man and Woman in Cathedral* (1956, plate 7). The artist placed his sculptures on mismatched, ad hoc pedestals – a barrel, cans of paint, and a crate – in the snow on Lake George. This odd assortment of irregularly shaped totems seems not to fit into the landscape. They also seem not to belong together. By presenting them as flattened contours against the pale backdrop, Smith has underscored the originality and uniqueness of each individual thing. He achieves this push and pull – between landscape and abstract

steel sculpture, between individual and collective – using a low point of view and crisp focus. Situated against the landscape, the sculptures articulate the polarities that O'Hara described.

In this photograph as well as the dock series, Smith uses the landscape as both a location and a backdrop to envision sculpture's otherness, its dissociation from the present. In a 1947 poem, Smith described the landscape in similar terms, offering a model for imagining alterity by looking at what is close at hand:

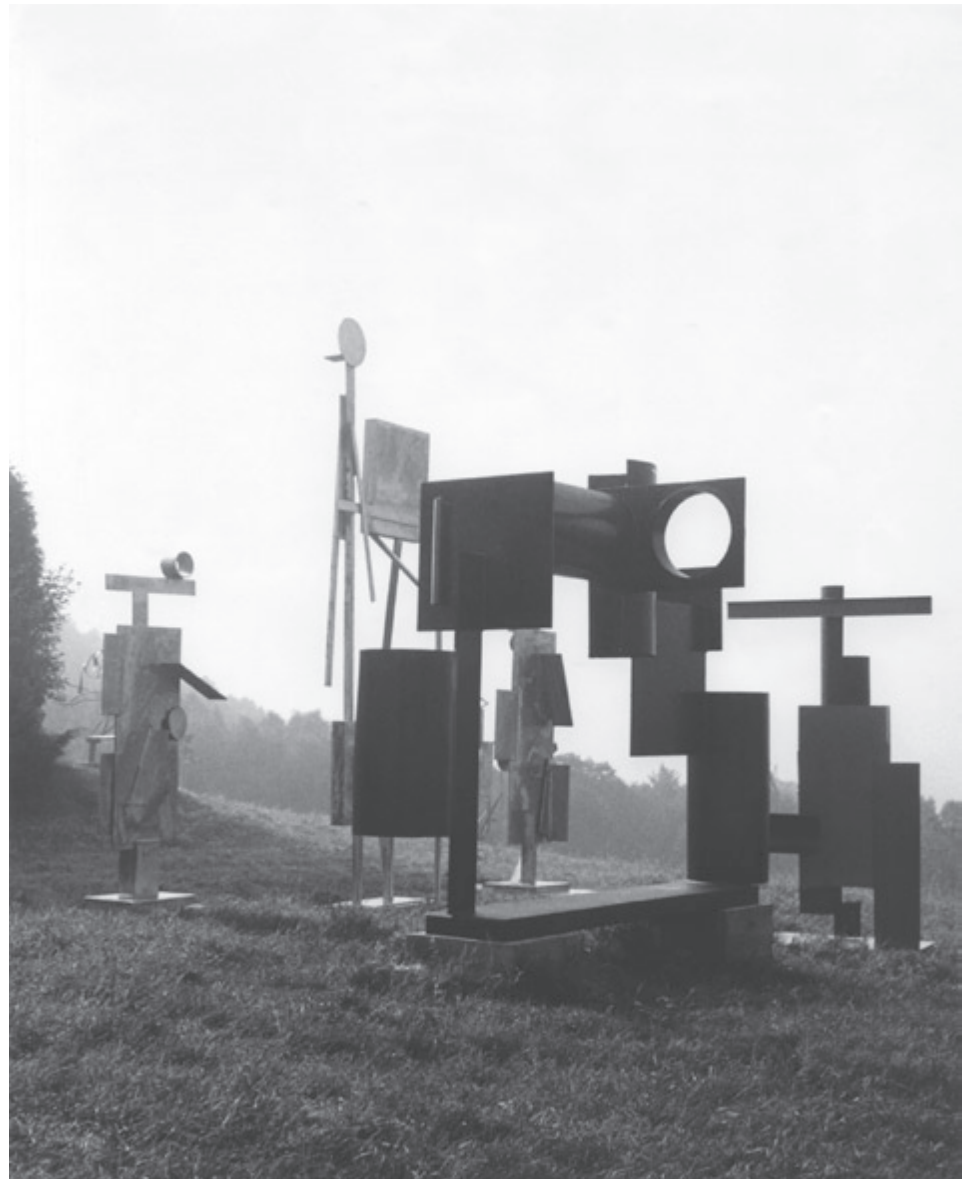
I have never looked at a landscape without seeing other landscapes  
I have never seen a landscape without visions of things I desire and despise  
lower landscapes have crusts of heat – raw epidermis and the choke of vines  
the separate lines of salt errors – monadnocks of fungus  
the balance of stone – with gestures to grow  
the lost posts of manmaid boundaries – in molten shade  
a landscape is a still life in Chaldean history  
it has faces I do not know  
its mountains are always sobbing females  
it is bags of melons and prickly pears  
its woods are sawed to boards  
its black hills bristle with maiden fern  
its stones are Assyrian fragments  
it flows the bogside beauty of the river Liffey  
it is colored by indiana gas green  
it is steeped in veritable Indian yellow  
it is the place I've travelled to and never found  
it is somehow veiled to vision by pious bastards and the lord of Varu the  
nobleman from Gascogne  
in the distance it seems threatened by the destruction of gold<sup>24</sup>

In textual images infused with fictional, geographic, and historical place-names, Smith tacks between the present and a dream, between the landscape he is in and the other landscapes he seeks. Alterity is figured in the landscape he describes as the 'faces I do not know', and couched in a list of places that are literary (Dublin's river Liffey, made famous by Joyce), ancient (the Chaldean soothsayer's still-life), and geologic (the monadnock). The poem's descriptive terms ground a viewer in a range of evocative and disquieting scenes – the choke of vines, the black hills bristling with maiden ferns, or the mountains of sobbing females – representing the landscape as vividly present but also unavailable: it is the place never found, 'veiled to vision'. Throughout, the traveller-viewer is witness to the landscape's conflicting terms. The space Smith envisions is made up of diverse material facts and histories. It is a landscape that invokes beauty and unease, location and detachment, the space he sees and other possible spaces. Echoing the trope of the uncanny, Smith maps a fantasy of peripatetic inquiry, distance and separation.<sup>25</sup>

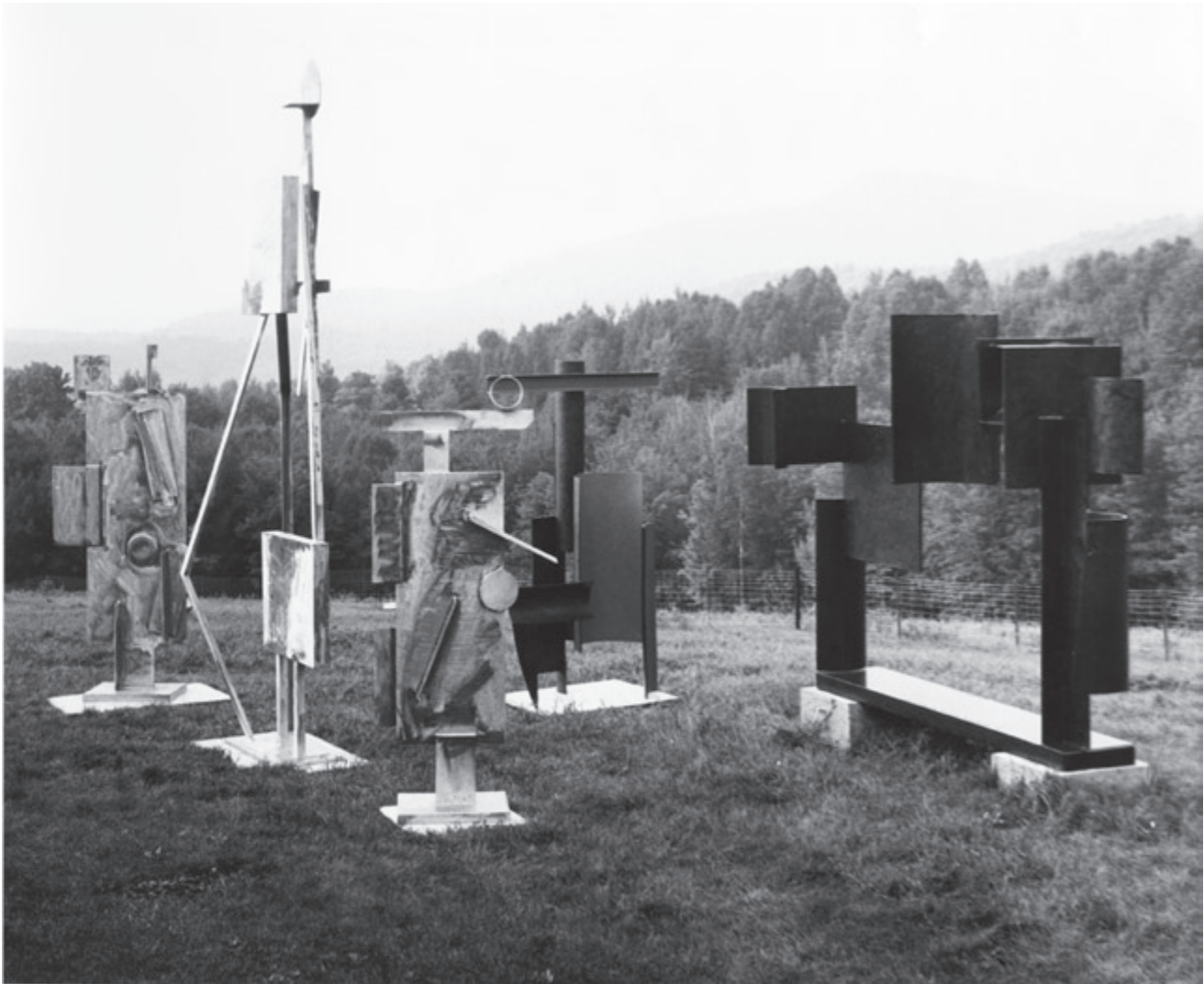
Smith's photographs of his sculpture similarly shuttle between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown, projecting an encounter of alienation and withdrawal. In 1961 Smith made a series of photographs, several of which were used to illustrate O'Hara's article, in which he presented recent works from his Zig and Sentinel series in the fields outside his studio. In some photographs, Smith homes in on the interplay of the different forms (plate 8).

The planes of objects overlap and touch in a cubist surface or a pictorial collage of shapes, framing a compositional geometry that makes the contours and edges of objects difficult to read. In others, Smith used a higher vantage point to emphasize his sculptures' shapes and show their placement in the sloping meadow outside his studio (plate 9). Composed of large-scale convex and concave shapes, the sculptures seem incongruous in their natural setting. Viewers are drawn into the image only to be thrust back out as they recognize that the scene presents an alternative world for sculpture.

Defining his sculpture in these group photographs as autonomous, Smith met a contemporaneous critical response to his work that described it as alien or otherworldly. Reviewing exhibitions of his work in 1953 and 1961, critic Emily Genauer observed that the sculptures were 'M[e]n-from-Mars' and 'mysteriously amused Martians', anthropomorphic forms made alien.<sup>26</sup> These epithets relate to the collision that his group photographs relay, or how Smith's sculpture in these images seems to straddle the human present and some distant future. Welded steel sculptures are made into quasi-figural forms, construed in an Arcadian scene. Genauer found



**8 David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) Lectern Sentinel, Two Box Structure, Zig III, March Sentinel (Stainless Steel Planes), and Zig II (all 1961) [The Carnegie Group], Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, 1961. Gelatin silver print, 25.4 × 20.3 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.***



**9 David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) Two Box Structure, Zig II, Two Circle Sentinel, and Zig III (all 1961), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, 1961. Gelatin silver print, 20.6 × 25.4 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.***

his ‘aggressive, talon-like monumental abstractions ... immensely, mysteriously, menacingly expressive’,<sup>27</sup> the list of descriptive words and phrases itself invoking a festival of qualities. The mystery she found suggests the open and aloof qualities of these objects, their self-sufficiency.

If Genauer’s analogies seemed bound up in the Sputnik-like possibilities of these objects, those of other critics revealed the nostalgia evoked by Smith’s melding of human and machine. The curator Sam Hunter wrote in 1961 that Smith’s world was ‘peopled by bland, amiable giants, impassive idols of the machine age’, underscoring the historical traces borne by those sculptures, as well as their deep mythical identities.<sup>28</sup> Smith’s incorporation of discarded machine parts, like the welded seams that hold them in place, stand in for and mark out what the sculptor recognized was the impending obsolescence of welded objects. As Wagner has argued:

When the age of tanks and locomotives was over, [sculpture] would preserve the skills that had once brought them to be. Which is to say not only that Smith grasped the inevitable obsolescence of welded objects but also that he understood welded sculpture as both a quintessential product of its moment and a means of manufacture ideally positioned to exhibit the skilled

labour by which other products came to be. In so doing, it testified to skills, livelihoods, and lifeworlds that, as Smith recognised, capitalism makes use of only to leave behind.<sup>29</sup>

Smith's photographs memorialize his works' connection to industry by exaggerating their disconnection from the landscape. His images of objects clustered in provisional groups designate and mark out another world for welded steel sculpture, operating like self-contained dioramas, an analogy that the painter Kenneth Noland used to describe Smith's staging of his works in his fields.<sup>30</sup> In a photograph of a group that includes works from the Sentinel series, Smith positioned the sculptures on the gravel driveway outside his studio where snow partially covers the ground (plate 10). The sculptures form an inverted V shape, projecting into deep space. In this structured formation, the works seem threatening, even menacing – effects the sculptor dramatized by using a low point of view and by presenting their angular shapes and sharp lines against the soft contours of distant mountains. Seen from close to the ground, objects register as imposing, monumental things, and the photograph amplifies the structural differences between them. Unlike the photograph of the Forgings on the frozen lake (see plate 7), however, which presents a series of stark contrasts, Smith seeks a relationship of give-and-take between sculpture and landscape. The sculptures look

**10** David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) Personage of August (1956), Sentinel I (1956), Running Daughter (1956–60, unfinished), Tanktotem VI (1957), Sentinel II (1957), Pilgrim (1957), and The Five Spring (1956), Bolton Landing, NY, c. 1958*. Gelatin silver print, 24.8 × 19.8 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



like an army of individualized forms that are both grounded within and distinct from their surroundings.

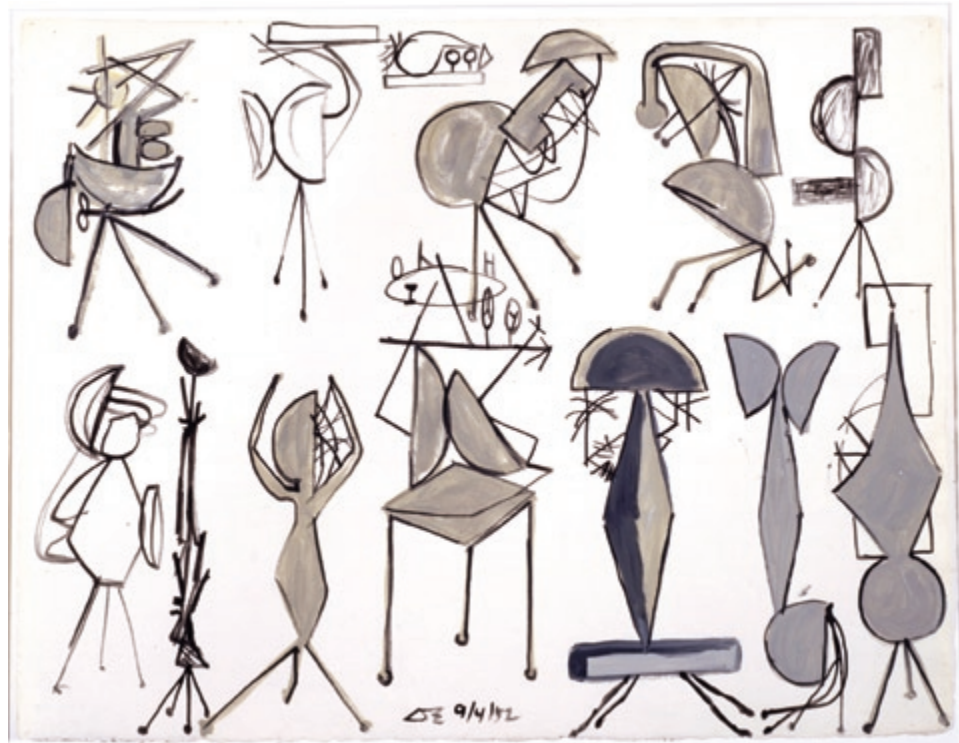
In 1962 Smith found a new setting in which to pictorialize his steel sculpture. He received a residential grant that year from the Italian steel corporation, Italsider, and was asked to make two sculptures for the Spoleto Festival of the Two Worlds. Italsider gave Smith access to an unused factory in Voltri, Italy in which to produce sculptures and, for the first time, assistance from a staff of six skilled workmen. With their help, he began working on a larger scale and made twenty-seven works in one month – sculptures of monumental size that incorporated discarded parts and scraps from other Italsider factories.<sup>31</sup> When it came time to install his work, the director of the Spoleto Festival, Giovanni Caradente, placed the sculptures in a reconstructed Roman amphitheatre as well as in the town of Spoleto. The classical ruin offered a new foil for Smith's modernist structures that photographer Ugo Mulas dramatized in all-over shots that show welded steel sculptures occupying the ancient ruin, some taken at night; the human scale of the setting amplifies these already large industrially scaled forms.

Smith, too, took photographs of the scene; in one, he positioned his camera low to the ground to monumentalize *Voltri VI* within and against its ancient Roman backdrop (plate 11). The photograph frames a composition in which the sculpture's cut steel shape seems to merge with the architectural structure behind it. Smith structures a formal interplay between sculpture and its classical surroundings like the photograph of the *Sentinels* on the gravel driveway (see plate 10). The artist was



11 David Smith, *Photograph of Voltri VI (1962), installed in the Anfiteatro Romano, Spoleto, 1962*. Gelatin silver contact print and crayon, 6.2 × 6 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

12 David Smith, ΔΣ 9/14/52  
(Study for Tanktotems), 1952.  
Tempera and ink on paper,  
46.4 × 59.4 cm). New York:  
The Estate of David Smith. ©  
The Estate of David Smith/  
Licensed by VAGA, New  
York, NY.



drawn to this staging of his work, observing how the juxtaposed stainless steel cubes of *Cubi IX* – which Caradente placed in front of a medieval church after Smith shipped it from Bolton Landing before the show – played off the ‘soft variables of the church wall stones’.<sup>32</sup>

In stagings such as those at Spoleto, Smith relied on the medium of photography to commemorate and embellish his sculpture, articulating their connections to industry through setting and vantage point. These images tell us something about how the artist used photography as a representational device capable of capturing and transforming the objects of its focus. Notably, Smith did not use drawing to visualize these scenes, although that medium also served a role in his project. The sculptor often made preparatory sketches of works and recorded his sculptures in his notebooks by sketching their contours. In his 1952 study for the Tanktotem series (plate 12), for example, Smith used inked lines as well as brown and grey paint to imagine sculptural forms. Each form is based on a tripod support comprising iron rods and ball bearings. Round tank shapes, abstract pieces of steel, and pictogram letters make up the rest of the forms. The spindly legs and arms of these sculptures call up an army of otherworldly bodies, fodder for the sculptor’s torch. Studies or imaginative renderings, these drawings do not conceptualize sculpture’s placement or setting or conjure a believable world.

Look again at Smith’s dock photographs of 1953 (see plate 1 and plate 2). They use the camera to stage an unsettling collision between the industrial and the pastoral, present and past, figure and machine. Unlike the drawings, the photograph conjures a convincing, illusionistic space for sculpture, all the better to picture the radical otherness of his work. Situated on the human setting of the dock, his sculptures form a loose collective of quasi-figural, primordial totems in a space that seems mundane. Yet Smith has construed them at a remove using a low vantage point and blurring the background through a shallow depth of





13 David Smith, *Photographs of 7/9/53, Tanktotem III, Tanktotem IV, and Bi-Cycle (all 1953), Bolton Landing Dock, Lake George, NY, c. 1953*. Gelatin silver contact prints and ink on paper envelope, 11.4 x 15.4 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

field. As contact sheets of these images reveal, Smith also reframed the scene, cropping the landscape to fit an eight by ten format (plate 13). By restricting the surrounding space, Smith placed emphasis on his sculptures, heightening their command over their setting. In the final prints, the sculptures form a disorderly group of individualized forms dislodged from their surroundings. Here is where the memorializing function of Smith's photographs lies. The dock photographs stir up suggestions of belonging and place, of community and groundedness, only to leave them unresolved. For the sculptures are not fully at home on the dock; nor are they fully confident as a group. The photographs raise questions about belonging and collectivity by upending connections to place and site. To borrow the words of Blake Stimson writing about post-war photography, they ask 'How to belong in this world and constitute new forms of such belonging?'<sup>33</sup> In placing industrially made sculpture in a landscape setting, the dock photographs visualize an unsettling of expectations for encountering solid objects in the round, by suggesting that sculpture is both within and apart from the here-and-now.

### The Non-Belonging of Sculpture

Smith's staging of sculpture proposes a fantasy of viewing in which the modernist object is part of a separate world of fragmentary things. It was a fantasy prevalent among modern sculptors' photographic displays of their work, the most famous of them Constantin Brancusi's 1923 shots of his Paris studio at 8 Impasse Ronsin. In these evocative group images, the sculptor staged elaborate scenes, using large blocks of wood and stone as props. He situated his sculptures

amid these colossal pieces of raw material, animating them in an imagined scene of primordial ruin. Beginning in the 1920s Brancusi frequently published these photographs and they likely influenced Smith's own.<sup>34</sup> The group photographs appeared alongside one-on-one photographs of his works, forming concise yet suggestive photo-essays of his sculptures that, as Potts has argued, invited viewers to move between individual presentations and group studies 'presented as if one were coming across them almost accidentally while scanning the studio environment'.<sup>35</sup>

In one of the 1923 photographs, several objects appear in shadow, while others are illuminated by a flash of light erupting from behind a block of wood (plate 14). The smooth finish of polished bronze is juxtaposed to the rough surfaces of wood and stone. Off to the left, a canvas drapes and cloaks a form. Brancusi's framing seems arbitrary; objects are cut off haphazardly by the frame, suggesting that the scene continues beyond what is visible in the picture. The photograph structures, as contemporaneous writers repeatedly observed, an order of space and time outside the rational structure of urban space. The scene suggests a 'dream', 'wild space', 'forest of spheres' – phrases Brancusi's contemporaries used to describe what they saw on actual visits to his studio in the 1920s, or derived from the sculptor's photographs. These writers painted an encounter of deep nostalgic fascination and engagement with a dislocated, timeless sphere.<sup>36</sup> In Brancusi's images, the studio emerges as a place with a disordered order of its own, like an untamed frontier or a space of wild abandon and wreckage.<sup>37</sup>

In this fantastical image, the sculptor has crafted a separate world for sculpture using the artist's studio. As Jon Wood has described these photographs, they frame a 'microcosmic world where stone, wood and metal all take their place within a strange, quasi-natural order'.<sup>38</sup> Sculpture, Brancusi's photograph suggests, is meant to be read within that microcosmic world, a place that unsettles any expectations that sculptures have boundaries and edges, just as it subverts more sanitized aesthetic displays. Whereas a museum or gallery would present Brancusi's works

**14 Constantin Brancusi, View of the Studio (with The Sorceress (1916–24, in progress), Bird in Space (plaster, 1923–24), Bird in Space (yellow marble, 1923–24), Socrates (1921–22), and Princess X (1915–16)), c. 1923. Gelatin silver glass negative, 18 × 13 cm. Paris: Centre Pompidou (MNAM-CCI (PH 37)). © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.**



on pedestals lining the room, as contemporaneous installation shots show, his microcosm departs from such an ordered installation and the logic of consumption that goes hand in hand with it, proposing instead a timeless dream world.<sup>39</sup>

Like Brancusi's studio views, Smith's photographs of his objects present an autonomous space for sculpture radically dissociated from the present. His photographs return to an enduring narrative of modern sculpture's alienation and homelessness – what Rainer Maria Rilke termed its 'own-ness'. In 1900 Rilke described a romanticized fantasy of sculpture's solitary stance in a passage about the sculpture of Auguste Rodin:

The room in which a statue stands is its foreign land – it has its environment within itself, and its eye and the expression of its face relate to that environment concealed and folded within its shape. There are figures which radiate tightness, crowdedness, interior, and others which are undoubtedly imagined and seen in a wide open space, in a plain, against the sky. To him who sees them correctly it is always their Own-ness that is their native setting, not the accidental room in which they are placed or the empty wall against which they stand out.<sup>40</sup>

Rilke defines modern sculpture's identity: its relationship to its accidental environment is as a foreigner. Meaning is located in the object, as a product of its making and display. Such self-sufficiency carried an aesthetic mandate: in order to be grasped as an artwork, sculpture must refuse the everyday world, remain independent of 'the people', as Rilke wrote, conjuring an incidental crowd.<sup>41</sup> Yet what Rilke construed as an aesthetic necessity also became an embellished fiction. 'It has its environment within itself', he claimed, calling attention to the somewhat forlorn solitariness of the modernist object. Sculptural autonomy, in this view, is construed as a romantic individualism.<sup>42</sup> Although they were taken after Rilke wrote these phrases, Edward Steichen's 1908 sensationalizing shots of Rodin's *Balzac* pictured as an individualized, looming figure under moonlight conjure a similar vision.<sup>43</sup>

In her fundamental description of twentieth-century sculpture, Rosalind Krauss subsequently jettisoned this mythologizing rhetoric of individualism. In 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979), she categorized what she saw as the recent turn in sculpture to site-based practices, and her argument hinged on an encapsulation of the earlier model, what she called modern sculpture's nomadism:

With these two sculptural projects [Rodin's *Gates of Hell* and *Balzac*], I would say, one crosses the threshold of the logic of the monument, entering the space of what could be called its negative condition – a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place. Which is to say one enters modernism, since it is the modernist period of sculptural production that operates in relation to this loss of site, producing the monument as abstraction, the monument as pure marker or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential. It is these two characteristics of modernist sculpture that declare its status, and therefore its meaning and function, as essentially nomadic.<sup>44</sup>

Krauss's text frames modern sculpture's separateness or autonomy as a by-product of the alienating effects of modernization and rationalization, or as part of the



**15 Unknown Photographer,**  
*Photograph of Alberto*  
**Giacometti, Three Figures**  
*(1930–31), Maloja, c. 1931.*  
 Silver print on paper, 7.9 ×  
 5.2 cm. Paris: Collection  
 Fondation Alberto et Annette  
 Giacometti (2003-0693). ©  
 Alberto Giacometti Estate/  
 Licensed by VAGA and ARS,  
 New York, NY.

disenchantment of the world, to call upon Max Weber’s formulation. Mirroring technological modernization – specifically, processes of replication and reproduction – sculpture operated in modernism as a negative condition of the monument, a loss of site. According to Krauss, it was repeatable and itinerant, not requiring any particular placement for its meaning. Siteless or placeless, sculpture operated increasingly in modernism as pure negativity, as the absence of place, marker, and base. By the 1950s, Krauss writes, ‘modernist sculpture appeared as a kind of black hole in the space of consciousness, something whose positive content was increasingly difficult to define, something that was possible to locate only in terms of what it was not.’<sup>45</sup> This negative condition serves as the basis of her formulation of sculpture in the twentieth century. Modern sculpture registered as an unattainable, nomadic object – a loss of place she claims was righted in site-specific projects of the 1970s in their opposition to landscape and architecture.

This essay proposes that photography’s intervention in sculptural display offers an altogether different and more nuanced picture of modern sculpture’s homelessness. In photographs taken by Smith and other modern sculptors, the disconnection of sculpture from the here-and-now appears as a positive condition, something to be imagined and attained photographically, something to be magnified

and rendered. Homelessness thus describes not the object’s alienated stance, its abstraction or lack, but the possibility of an open work of art. These proposals are felt most deeply in photographs that stage a separate yet unstable world for sculpture, forging new relationships of difference and precariousness.

One of the common ways in which sculptors imagined their works’ independence was by dramatizing their primitivism using the theme of the archaeological ruin. Brancusi’s studio views and Smith’s and Mulas’s Spoleto photographs stage groups of objects in ways that draw attention to their primitive features, or how they appear as archaeological remnants or primeval forms. This primitivizing of sculpture went hand in hand with conceptions of the modernist object as a figure that was familiar but distant and unknowable. In 1930, for instance, Alberto Giacometti staged three plaster abstract figures in Maloja, in the Swiss Alps and had them photographed (plate 15). The works are studies he made for a commission of a single sculpture he would complete later that year in Paris. In the photograph, which was published in *Minotaure* in 1933 in the same article presenting Brancusi’s studio views, Giacometti displays the triad in an alpine meadow, and viewers are encouraged to read them as a familial group of prehistoric plinths or primordial totems in the landscape.

Moore also animated his sculptures as primitive forms by photographing them near his Burcroft, Kent cottage amidst rough-hewn, uneven plinths of stone he had set in the garden and used as temporary bases for his work (plate 16). In his photographs, he linked sculptures to their setting, as if the carved objects were

**16 Henry Moore, *Photograph of Reclining Figure (1939)*, Burcroft, Kent, 1939. Gelatin silver print, dimensions unknown. Perry Green: Henry Moore Foundation. Reproduced by permission of the Henry Moore Foundation.**

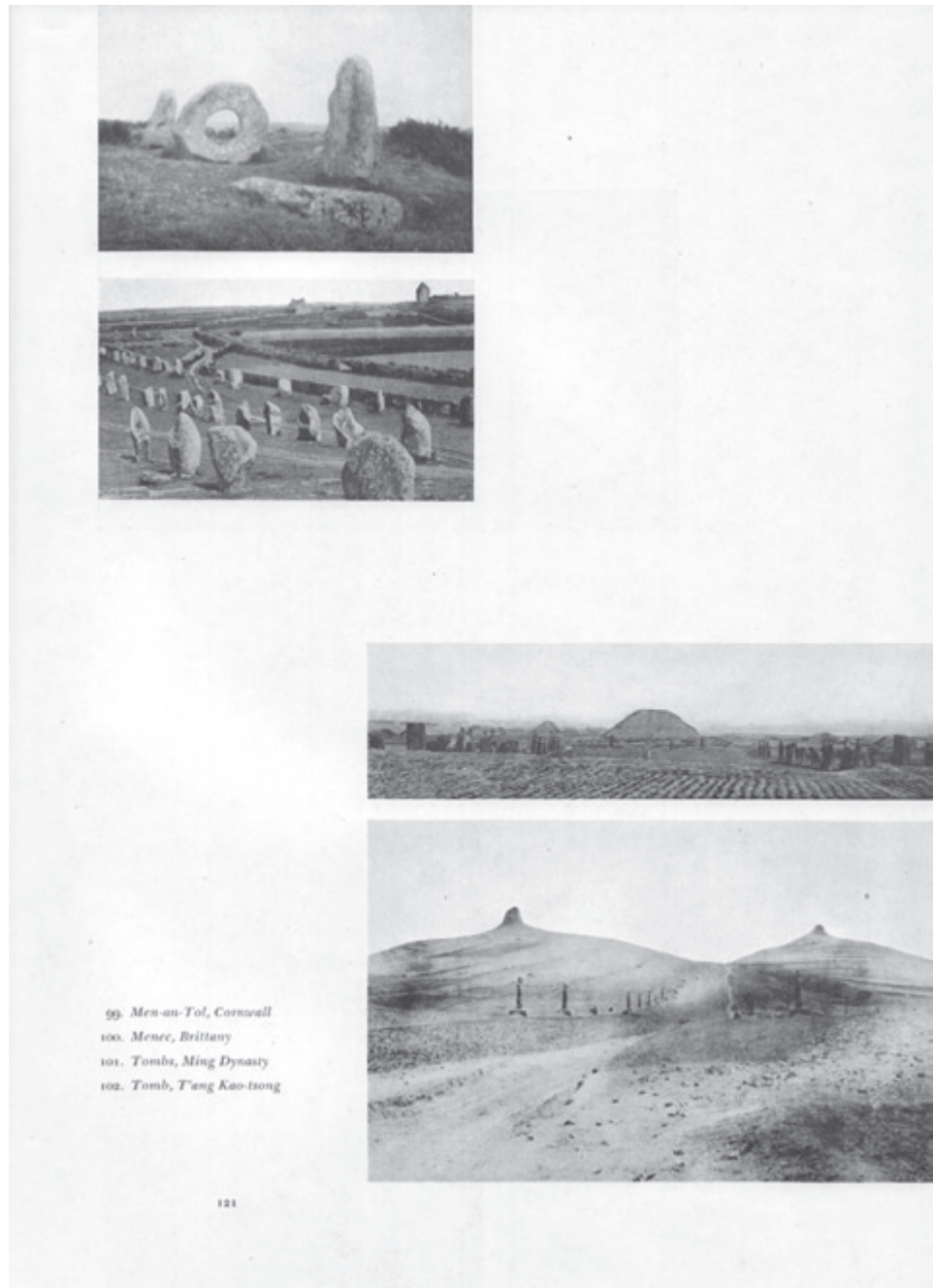


also archaic forms that had been found amidst the stones. In these photographs, Moore stages an interaction between sculpture and landscape that differs from the unsettling one Smith construed.<sup>46</sup> Whereas Smith's photographs envisage a disconnection of abstract steel sculpture from the resonant, mountain landscape, Moore's photograph imagines his sculpture in equanimity with its surroundings – the *Reclining Figure* is an eternal, enduring body unified with the landscape setting, conveying notions of solidity and permanence.

It was possibly these primitivist associations – staged photographically in images by Moore and others – that W. R. Valentiner and Carola Giedion-Welcker were drawn to in their studies of modern sculpture, which unfold as photo-essays interspersed with text. Valentiner's *Origins of Modern Sculpture* (1946) adopted its format and content from Giedion-Welcker's *Modern Plastic Art* (1937), a debt Valentiner acknowledged in his introduction. Both texts recounted a history of modern sculpture in their constellation of photographs, which illustrate ancient tombs and prehistoric sites as well as sculpture. The viewer is invited to compare modernist objects to archaeological ruins, suggesting a primitivist reading of modern sculpture that is based on the visual correspondence of forms. Giedion-Welcker, for instance, interspersed illustrations of Jean Arp's sculpture with photographs of landscapes of round stones in a streambed and images of prehistoric monoliths. Valentiner borrowed this format, and even used the same contextual photographs to make his arguments. He juxtaposed Moore's 1930s photographs, for instance, to images of the standing stones of Mên-an Tol and Ménéac and the ordered archaeological sites of Chinese tombs (plate 17). Valentiner makes a claim for these prehistoric monuments as a corrective to urbanism and modern warfare. Their abstract shapes directly mark the landscape, exhibiting signs of wholeness, an eternal oneness with nature, no longer possible in modernity. Comparing Moore's sculptures to these monuments, he finds in them an expression of 'our deep longing for a closer connection with the elemental

forces of nature as found in primeval deserts, mountains, and forests, away from cities, away from artificial life guided by intellect instead of by emotional energies'.<sup>47</sup> In Valentiner's text, the series of photographs asks readers to see in Moore's sculptures the inscrutable remnants of an archaic past – as if Moore's carved figures too had been found in the landscape, strange objects whose original import and function remain opaque yet whose promise of dwelling and unity captivates.

Like the photograph of Mên-an Tol that illustrates both Giedion-Welcker's and Valentiner's books, Moore's photographs suggest that his objects be read as immortal things, as if sculpture is innate to the enduring landscape. Penelope Curtis and Fiona Russell have argued that his photographs of sculpture contain resonant proposals for 'comfort and renewal':



17 Page 121 of W. R. Valentiner, *Origins of Modern Sculpture*, New York, 1946, illustrating: 'Men-an-Tol, Cornwall'; 'Menec, Brittany'; 'Tombs, Ming Dynasty'; 'Tomb, T'ang Kao-tsong' [figures 99–102].

The emptied-out body of a reclining female figure is filled by the landscape which it frames or holds. We are on a level with both the landscape and the sculpture. It is a sculpture of apparent continuity, a sculpture over which time has already passed, but it is also a sculpture which empties the landscape of its historical uneasiness and particularity.<sup>48</sup>

Curtis and Russell describe an effect of timelessness – a generalized, continuous time – that adheres to Moore's photographs, which imagine sculpture tied to the landscape, an expansive bodily form that is part of an enduring, Edenic world. Unlike Brancusi's use of ruins to suggest a space of clutter and creative disorder, Moore construes a space of community and wholeness, of harmony and renewal in the landscape.

Smith's photographs, by contrast, imagine a discordant and disparate collective unsettled from their surroundings. His group photographs set off tensions between objects, which exhibit disparate sizes and compositional structures. They do not conjure a relationship of harmony or of homogeneity, like the serial repetitions that minimalists would later foreground in their displays. For Smith, the differences between objects set them in motion and raised questions about their collective identity.

The psychological drama Smith's photographs stage is closer to Bourgeois's installations in 1949 and 1950 of works in her *Personage* series at the Peridot gallery in New York, an exhibition Smith attended.<sup>49</sup> Bourgeois installed her totemic structures directly on the floor of the gallery. Their bases, if any, were minimal, several centimetres of steel to anchor the sculpture and secure the verticality of the forms. Because the works were freestanding, they could be shifted into new arrangements or 'groups of objects relating to each other', as Bourgeois emphasized.<sup>50</sup> Sculptures were grouped in twos or threes, as if mapped on a 'readable floor graph', but not arranged in a grid, as a photograph of the 1950 show taken by Aaron Siskind makes clear (plate 18).<sup>51</sup> Siskind captured the scene from a high vantage



**18 Aaron Siskind, *Installation View of Louise Bourgeois: Sculptures, Peridot Gallery, New York, 1950, c. 1950*. Gelatin silver print, dimensions unknown. New York: The Easton Foundation (LB-1277). © The Easton Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY, and Aaron Siskind Foundation, courtesy of Bruce Silverstein Gallery, NY.**

19 David Smith, *Photograph of (left to right) Forging IV, Forging III, Forging I (unfinished), Untitled, Forging IX, Forging XI, Construction in Rectangles, Forging II, and Construction with Forged Neck (all 1955), Bolton Landing, New York, c. 1955. Gelatin silver print, 20.3 × 25.2 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.*



point, probably from the top of two stairs that served as the entrance to the gallery, framing the installation from above. The photographer places viewers outside the grouping, just beyond a duo of sculptures, like intruders on a tense scene. The works are paired off and stand together tentatively in mismatched clusters with each of the pairs pulling away from each other. Their human size and upright stance draw viewers into the group's oppositional dynamic; yet the stark linear contrasts of the abstract forms, no match to fleshy bodies, keeps identification at bay. In the Peridot display, Bourgeois constructs a space in which one individual relates tentatively and uncertainly to the next.

Bourgeois's exhibition presented what she termed a 'social space', in which 'you had the very strong sense of something going on', as she told an interviewer in 1976.<sup>52</sup> Writing in 1954, Bourgeois described how her 'work grows from the duel between the isolated individual and the shared awareness of the group', structuring a 'drama of one among many'.<sup>53</sup> The drama might be one involving a raucous family or an alliance of close friends – loose analogies of kinship that Bourgeois herself alluded to. In one narrative she often repeated, she identified the Personages as standing in for the family and friends that she left behind in France on moving to New York in 1938. The sculptures were 'badly missed presences', she noted, and the Peridot exhibition was 'a tangible way of re-creating a missed past'.<sup>54</sup> But Bourgeois also stepped away from such autobiographical statements. Rather than name the sculptures as distinct identities, she stressed their spatial relationships, how they were 'the expression, in abstract terms, of emotions and states of awareness'.<sup>55</sup>

Bourgeois's installation relies on a primitivizing notion of sculptural form: each object's totemic qualities ensures its distance from the beholder. But Bourgeois also used the collective staging of sculpture to conjure its otherness.<sup>56</sup> Like Brancusi's



studio as ruin or Smith's Arcadian dock, the gallery became a space to animate a group of works that registered as dramatically 'other'. Not tied to a particular place or location, Bourgeois' installations emphasized sculpture's mobility and openness, while also raising questions about its collective identity.<sup>57</sup> That identity is fractured in Bourgeois's imagining, shot through with psychic discord so that the group of sculptures is envisaged as dissonant and broken.

Smith's photographs of works from his Forging series seem to speak directly to the Peridot exhibitions, engaging their terms of difference. In an image Smith published in a 1956 Willard Gallery exhibition catalogue, he staged a group that included the Forgings, using his signature low vantage point and cropping the photograph just below the plinth on which he placed his works. Flattened to linear pillars, the works take on monumental qualities, looming above the space of the beholder. Yet the photograph also structures a comparison to underscore the differences between objects, how each one is handmade and unique in size and shape (plate 19). Standing ninety-one centimetres tall, *Untitled (Standing Figure with Phallic Detail)* (1955) plays off the taller *Forging XI*, which reaches a height of 228 centimetres. The group also contains a range of shapes: the smooth lines of the Forgings, which Smith made by hammering and punching hot lengths of steel using an industrial power forge, are contrasted with *Construction with Forged Neck* (1955), third from right, and *Construction in Rectangles* (1955) on the far right, which the sculptor made by welding disparate parts together.<sup>58</sup> In this photograph, the sculptor demonstrates the breadth of his skill, from forge to torch, by animating the distinctions in the interplay of objects. The image uses a low vantage point to flatten the forms into a set of contrasts. Each sculpture appears as an idiosyncratic thing that belongs to an object-language viewers cannot understand.

### **In Place of the Public**

Together these diverse photographs of works by Smith, Bourgeois, and others comment on sculpture's place in the public sphere. That it has a place was far from certain, an ambivalence revealed by sculptors' photographs, which question sculpture's belonging and collectivity in modernism. Those questions might be put this way: What does it mean to make public sculpture in the post-war era? What would such a sculpture look like, if it was meant to be a model of public collaboration? How would it give voice to notions of belonging and collectivity, when the idea of a monolithic public was increasingly tied to consumerism and corporatization? Smith sought a model for sculpture that proposed community as a tentative possibility; its place in a broader collective would be provisional and open.

Stephen Melville and Margaret Iversen have described Smith's photographs in *Writing Art History* as presenting 'conversational groups, asking [sculptures] to manifest among themselves something like the terms they imagine for their audience'.<sup>59</sup> What Melville and Iversen observe in this brief description is how the photographs might suggest dissonance as a term for public space, reflecting friction in their presentation of objects. In late modernism, according to this Hegelian model, wholeness, the ideal ascribed to classical sculpture, is no longer possible given the structural disconnection of inside and outside, surface and core that Smith's sculptures register in their structural vacancy. By modelling incongruity – absence and emptiness – Smith's photographs communicated their terms to their public, to mirror the only collective possible in modernism, one of dispersal and fragmentation.<sup>60</sup>

The sculptor himself was vocal about the impossibility of public sculpture in the post-war era. He increasingly expressed dismay at the corporatization of public art. This was a radical shift from his earlier commitment to public sculpture, which

he envisioned as taking place as a collaboration with architecture. In the early 1940s Smith wrote a series of essays in which he mapped out a vision for a collaborative give-and-take between the two media as a model for societal ideals of community. In this collaboration, sculpture would not be an afterthought – a monument, adornment, or ‘mere billboard’ – in relation to the surrounding structure, but would influence and instruct architectural design by incorporating steel and iron, the very materials of the new twentieth-century urban landscape.<sup>61</sup> In an essay written for *Architectural Record* in 1940, Smith underscored what it meant to view sculpture in its architectural surround:

Lines can indicate form by outline, can confine areas, can maintain their own sculptural import, yet lose nothing by permitting a view of a building or the landscape through the open areas which may represent the inside of the sculptural form. To view a building through the branches of a tree destroys neither the aesthetic value of the tree nor the aesthetic value of the building; they both bear the added interest of associated objects.<sup>62</sup>

Smith sketched a scenario in which sculpture and architecture framed each other in windows or through well-situated branches. The scene’s protagonist, the viewer, would move from one compositional vantage to another, building a resonant and interactive picture by juxtaposing views. Conceived visually, the collaboration would also find spatial footing.

Smith’s ideals were short-lived, however. In 1950 he noted that sculpture no longer depended ‘upon a setting or continuity for its impact’, and declared its separation from architecture complete.<sup>63</sup> What caused Smith to confirm the split? He had come to believe architecture a ‘strictly commercial art’, subject to the pressures of the market and contingent on a building’s function.<sup>64</sup> Increasingly ‘complex and collective’, ‘big’ architecture involved mechanisms of serialization and bureaucracy that ran counter to Smith’s conception of his sculpture: as a one-on-one sustained ‘direct action in working’ that produced a single and original object.<sup>65</sup> Looking back in 1957, he referred to his earlier hope for a community of sculpture and architecture as a ‘marvel of idealism’.<sup>66</sup> With different aims and motivations, architecture could only dominate sculpture; the ‘collaboration’ would never be one of equals. In a lecture he gave at Pratt in 1963, Smith returned to the issue, dealing the final blow:

To get art, architects will have to prepare themselves to take sculpture on its own independent merits. And they will have to subordinate their own egos to the extent of permitting the work of sculpture to relate itself to the work of architecture as one contemporary autonomy to another, in a relationship of esthetic strength and joint excellence. This is up to the architect, not the sculptor, and until the architect acquires the needed humility, the two arts will remain the strangers they have long been to one another.<sup>67</sup>

These declarations about the failed collaboration of architecture and sculpture go hand in hand with statements Smith made about the fate of public sculpture in the post-war years. When he was interviewed by David Sylvester in 1961, he expressed nostalgia for the 1930s and early 1940s as a time of belonging and community: ‘In a sense, we belonged to society at large. It was the first time that we ever belonged or had recognition from our own government that we existed.’<sup>68</sup> Smith chalked up the shift away from communal forms of artistic practice to the dearth of public patronage or commissions.<sup>69</sup> He also told Thomas Hess in 1964 that the public was unlikely to welcome his work: ‘I don’t see

it being accepted in present capitalist society, nor in a contemporary socialist society, the only regards that I get in the way of compliments are from other artists.<sup>70</sup> Here Smith articulated a shift from a communal artistic identity of the 1930s to a more independent one entailing withdrawal from the public sphere. Alongside other post-war artists and theorists, Potts describes how, 'Smith was forced to conclude that the only viable destiny for a modern sculpture was as an individual creation that would address the viewer on a one-to-one basis, and would thus have to be siteless or homeless.'<sup>71</sup>

Smith used photography in the 1950s and 1960s to frame these concepts of alienation and distance, independence and withdrawal, by staging his works in unexpected settings. In his photographs of multiple sculptures as collectives, the sculptor gave visual form to what he described as the impossibility of belonging in the post-war era and the failure of public sculpture as a claim to monumentality. Yet his photographs are not nostalgic, meant to restore the lost ideals of community and collaboration. Unlike the images of harmony conveyed by Moore's 1930s presentations of his works as one with landscape, Smith staged uneasy relationships between objects and their surroundings. The photographs posit an alternative space for sculpture that hinges on asymmetry and difference, suggesting the impossibility of the public monument as a stable model of communal wholeness. To return to Melville and Iversen's description of the 'conversational' group photographs, they 'claim a collective audience of a certain dispersed kind'.<sup>72</sup>

Paradoxically, even as Smith visualized his sculptures as autonomous from the here and now, imagining a withdrawal from the public sphere, he did so in a medium that communicated his sculpture to a wide and heteronomous audience.<sup>73</sup> Smith seized on mechanical reproduction as an alternative venue for his work, to reach a community he may have imagined as separate from the world of corporate patronage and the false ideals of monumentality. He circulated his photographs widely, leaving open the possibility that it was in the reproducible medium of photography that Smith had found his sculpture's public life, through unconventional and provisional channels. Rather than engage with the increasingly corporate structures of public art, he could use photography to launch his objects into the public sphere, and do so in a way that suggests an unsettling of expectations for the solid object.

In a photograph of *Tanktotem IV* (1953, plate 20) Smith imagined this dislocation in a new pictorial model by staging a single work in an unconventional setting. The sculpture is positioned directly on the ground, without a pedestal or supporting structure. Its three lanky legs rest on the sandy dirt, a space marked by tyre tracks; these signs of an inhabited, everyday place are brought into view through a crisp focus. The image presents a picture of sculpture that is difficult to resolve. For this much is clear: *Tanktotem IV* is not at home in the dirt driveway. How can it be, when awkward iron legs and welded tank tops are placed over a tyre track, a space marked by human – but not sculptural – activities? Yet the sculpture is also resolutely there, standing in the way. In the photograph, *Tanktotem IV* looks like a self-sufficient, independent thing, in the landscape yet removed from it.<sup>74</sup> The shallow depth of field isolates the harsh edges of the abstract steel sculpture from its softened background, repeating the oppositional terms of Smith's dock photographs in a one-on-one encounter. The sculpture is imagined to be suspended between ideas of place and placelessness, dwelling and homelessness. Or, as O'Hara put it simply to Smith in 1961, struggling to absorb and describe his recent trip to Bolton Landing: 'They get to me but I don't get to them.'<sup>75</sup> Sculpture would register

as both proximity and distance, impinging on the space of the beholder yet also resisting it.

Using photography, Smith framed these elusive, contingent relationships by presenting his sculptures in unexpected settings and photographing them from unusually low points of view. Smith's photographs destabilize objects by questioning concepts of solidity, belonging, groundedness, and permanence. They do so, moreover, through the sheer diversity of their approach, as if no single image could stand in for the work itself. *Tanktotem IV* is unsettled by the manifold sites in which it appears: on the dock, in the field, and on the driveway. Seen photographically, it registers as a shifting, contingent thing that changes according to its setting and point of view.

In the early 1960s, Smith sought to limit his sales, having decided instead to keep his works together in his fields. He wrote to a collector in 1961, 'I want to fill my field with my own work.'<sup>76</sup> Smith's decision has been read as a desire to structure a place or a home for his works, by making his fields a permanent installation site. But his photographs tell a different story. They positioned his works in ways that upend



**20 David Smith, *Photograph of Tanktotem IV*, 1953, c. 1953. Gelatin silver print, 23.7 × 19.2 cm. New York: The Estate of David Smith. © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.**

their connections to site and place.<sup>77</sup> The provisional relationships he staged between objects posed a question about belonging. Modernist objects in Smith's photographs are provisional; they are tied to this world while signalling another, separate space. These qualities rested on photography's discursive framework, on Smith's taking charge of his sculpture's public life. In photography – a medium that could be reproduced and widely circulated – Smith found his public, even as he fictionalized his sculpture's non-belonging in an image.

#### Notes

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- 1 Søren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way* (1845), as quoted in Walter Benjamin, 'Convolute I' *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge, MA, 1999, 218.
- 2 Alex Potts reads the dock as a pedestal in these photographs. See Alex Potts, 'Giacometti and the basis of sculpture', in Peter Read and Julia Kelly, eds, *Giacometti: Critical Essays*, Farnham, 2009, 147.
- 3 Clement Greenberg, 'Review of Exhibitions of Hyman Bloom, David Smith, and Robert Motherwell' (*Nation*, 26 January, 1946), *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism Volume 2*, Chicago, IL, 1988, 53.
- 4 See Clement Greenberg, 'Review of Exhibitions of David Smith, David Hare, and Mirko' (*Nation*, 19 April, 1947), *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism Volume 2*, 140; 'Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture' (*Horizon*, October 1947), *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism Volume 2*, 160; 'David Smith' (*Art in America*, 1956–17), *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism Volume 3*, Chicago, IL, 1995, 275; and 'Sculpture in Our Time' (*Arts Magazine*, June 1958), *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism Volume 4*, Chicago, IL, 1995, 55.
- 5 Anne M. Wagner, 'David Smith: Heavy metal', *A House Divided: American Art since 1955*, Berkeley, CA, 2012, 114.
- 6 Wagner's word is 'embody'. See Wagner, 'David Smith: Heavy metal', 114.
- 7 For accounts of the relationship between Smith and minimalism that focus on the issue of industry, see Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 'Michael Asher and the conclusion of modern sculpture', *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 10, 1983, 276–95; Hal Foster, 'The un/making of sculpture', (1998) in ed. Hal Foster with Gordon Hughes, Richard Serra, Cambridge, MA, 2000, 175–200; and Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, Berkeley, CA, 2009.
- 8 See, for instance, Rosalind Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith*, Cambridge, MA, 1971; E. A. Carmean, *David Smith*, Washington, DC, 1982; Stanley Marcus, *David Smith: The Sculptor and His Work*, Ithaca, NY, 1983; Karen Wilkin, *David Smith*, New York, 1984; and Alex Potts, 'Chapter 4: Modernist sculpture', *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, New Haven and London, 2000, 145–77.
- 9 Smith, 'Letter to Marian Willard' (31 January, 1947), Willard Gallery Archives, Archives of American Art, Washington, DC.
- 10 In a 1998 exhibition catalogue essay, Joan Pachner reintroduced Smith's photographs as his own. Joan Pachner, 'David Smith's photographs', in *David Smith: Photographs 1931–1965*, New York, 1998. Additional photographs have been published in exhibition catalogues, including Roxana Marcoci, ed., *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*, New York, 2010.
- 11 Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the expanded field', *October*, 8, Spring 1979, 34.
- 12 Alex Potts, 'Installation and sculpture', *Oxford Art Journal*, 24: 2, 2001, 11.
- 13 Walter Benjamin, 'Little history of photography', in Michael Jennings, ed., *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 2*, Cambridge, MA, 1999, 519.
- 14 Marian Willard, 'Letter to David Smith' (January 1948), Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 15 David Smith, 'Letter to Marian Willard' (February 1948), Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 16 See Rosalind Krauss, 'A photo a day: Recording the work of David Smith', in *David Smith: A Centennial*, New York, 2006, 14; and Helen M. Franc, 'Letter to Mrs. Krauss' (2 August, 1966), *David Smith Papers*, Museum of Modern Art, Museum Archives.
- 17 Even when Krauss returned to the topic of the photographs in 1998, by then recognizing them as part of Smith's sculptural project, she did not discuss the connections between his photographs and her analyses except to observe their similarities. She noted how the artist's photographs shape the totemic qualities that she identified in her 1970s accounts. Rosalind Krauss, 'David Smith's "new vision"', *David Smith: Photographs 1938–1965*, New York, 1998. For an analysis of Krauss's use of the photographs, see Sarah Hamill, *David Smith in Two Dimensions: Photography and the Matter of Sculpture*, Berkeley, CA, forthcoming.
- 18 Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, Cambridge, MA, 1977, 157.
- 19 The organizers of a 1960 French and Company exhibition echoed Smith's photographic stagings by installing clusters of sculptures directly on the floor.
- 20 Hilton Kramer connected Smith to this broader group, writing 'There are artists – one thinks of Giacometti in Paris and Henry Moore in Herefordshire – who are as much authors of their milieu as of their work; and Smith is one of these.' Hilton Kramer, 'The sculpture of David Smith' (1960), *The Age of the Avant-Garde, 1956–1972*, New Brunswick, NJ, 2009, 323.
- 21 Frank O'Hara, 'David Smith: The color of steel', *Art News*, 60, December 1961, 32–4.
- 22 O'Hara, 'David Smith: The color of steel', 32.
- 23 Ernst Scheidegger photographed Giacometti's sculpture in the 1950s and 1960s, and published his photographs in *Alberto Giacometti. Schriften, Fotos, Zeichnungen* (1958) and *L'atelier d'Alberto Giacometti* (1963). Several of Scheidegger's photographs were also published in Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Contemporary Sculpture: An Evolution in Volume and Space*, New York, 1955, 92–5. Describing his working relationship with Giacometti, he wrote in a 2001 catalogue: 'On Alberto's suggestion, I had begun to photograph his sculptures. . . . I loved to position the sculpture in a space in such a way that the space itself also affected the photograph. Alberto valued this type of shot. Very few of my photographs therefore have a neutral background. . . . Giacometti most liked to see his sculptures in nature, or in a street. This was not always easy to do. I loaded the large figures on a truck and the smaller ones in my car, in search of the fitting surroundings.' Ernst Scheidegger, *Traces of a Friendship: Alberto Giacometti*, Zurich and Frankfurt, 2001, 107.
- 24 Smith, 'The landscape', *David Smith*, New York, 1947. Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York. Republished in Cleve Gray, ed., 155, *David Smith by David Smith*, London, 1968.
- 25 For a discussion of the theme of the uncanny in modernism, see Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, Cambridge, MA, 1992, 6.
- 26 Emily Genauer, 'Sculpture by moderns on display', *New York Herald Tribune*, 1 February 1953, 16, as cited in Sarah Kianovsky, 'Annotated

- checklist of sculpture (general commentary)', in *David Smith: A Centennial*, 356; and Genauer, 'A Shahn miracle', *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 October 1961, section 4, 10, as cited in Kianovsky, 'Annotated checklist of sculpture (general commentary)', in *David Smith: A Centennial*, 367.
- 27 Genauer, 'A Shahn miracle', as cited in Kianovsky, 'Annotated checklist of sculpture (general commentary)', in *David Smith: A Centennial*, 367.
- 28 Sam Hunter, 'David Smith's new sculpture', in *David Smith: Recent Sculpture*, New York 1961, unpaginated.
- 29 Wagner, 'David Smith: Heavy metal', 114.
- 30 Kenneth Noland, cited in Candida Smith, *The Fields of David Smith*, New York, 1999, 53.
- 31 For discussions of Smith's Spoleto residency, see Rosalind Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works*, 34–7; E. A. Carmean, *David Smith*, 151–3; and Stanley Marcus, *David Smith: The Sculptor and His Work*, 137–45.
- 32 David Smith, 'Report on Voltri', in Garnett McCoy, ed., *David Smith*, New York, 1973, 162.
- 33 Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World*, Cambridge, MA, 2006, 58.
- 34 In addition to other journals and catalogues, they appeared in *Cahiers d'Art* in 1929 and *Minotaure* in 1933.
- 35 Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination*, 133.
- 36 For a discussion of timelessness in Brancusi's sculpture, see Margit Rowell, 'Brancusi: Timelessness in a modern mode', in Friedrich Teja Bach, Margit Rowell and Ann Temkin, *Constantin Brancusi: 1876–1957*, Philadelphia, PA, 1995, 38–49.
- 37 The studio contained, as one contemporaneous observer noted, 'great blocks of building stone, beams, trunks of trees, boulders and rocks, and here and there the highlight of a polished bronze'. Paul Morand, *Constantin Brancusi*, as cited in Ann Temkin, 'Brancusi and his American collectors', in Bach et al., *Constantin Brancusi: 1876–1957*, 60.
- 38 Jon Wood, *Close Encounters: The Sculptor's Studio in the Age of the Camera*, Leeds, 2001, 20–3.
- 39 Jon Wood discusses timelessness in the photographs of Brancusi and Moore. See Jon Wood, 'A household name: Henry Moore's studio-homes and their bearings, 1926–46', in Jane Beckett and Fiona Russell, eds, *Henry Moore: Critical Essays*, Aldershot, 2003, 30 and 34.
- 40 Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Notes (2 December 1900)', *Rodin and Other Prose Pieces*, London, 1986, 74.
- 41 Rilke, 'Notes (2 December 1900)', *Rodin and Other Prose Pieces*, 74.
- 42 For a discussion of Rilke's solitary individualism, see Kaja Silverman, *Flesh of My Flesh*, Stanford, CA, 2009.
- 43 See <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/33.43.36>; accessed 16 September 2013.
- 44 Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', 34.
- 45 Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', 34.
- 46 Alex Potts offers a different comparison of Moore's and Smith's photographs. Potts, 'Giacometti and the basis of sculpture', 131.
- 47 Valentiner, *Origins of Modern Sculpture*, New York, 1946, 140.
- 48 Penelope Curtis and Fiona Russell, 'Henry Moore and the post-war British landscape: Monuments ancient and modern', in *Henry Moore: Critical Essays*, 140.
- 49 See Smith, 'Letter to Lucille and Edgar Levy', November 1950, Edgar Levy and Lucille Corcos Levy Papers, Archives of American Art.
- 50 Bourgeois, 'An artist's words' (1954), in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds, *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father / Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews 1923–1997*, Cambridge, MA, 1998, 66. See Sarah Elise Archias, *Dagger Child: Louise Bourgeois's Primitivism* (master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2001).
- 51 Susi Bloch, 'An interview with Louise Bourgeois', *Art Journal*, 35: 4, Summer 1976, 372.
- 52 Bloch, 'An interview with Louise Bourgeois', 373.
- 53 Bourgeois, 'An artist's words', 66.
- 54 Bloch, 'An interview with Louise Bourgeois', 373. Mignon Nixon has described the *Personage* displays – and attendant sculptures like *Quarantania I* – as works of mourning. She writes: 'It is not that all the figures are memorials, or even that all are figures from the past, but that all stand for emotional adversity and the work of overcoming it, the "mental work" of living itself that is, for [Melanie] Klein, similar to mourning.' Mignon Nixon, *Fantastic Reality: Louise Bourgeois and a Story of Modern Art*, Cambridge, MA, 2005, 156.
- 55 Bourgeois, 'An artist's words', 66.
- 56 Alex Potts argues that Bourgeois's focus on 'the psychic arena of encounter between viewer and work' emphasizes the 'situation' of sculpture, placing her work closer to minimalism. Alex Potts, 'Louise Bourgeois: Sculptural confrontations', *Oxford Art Journal*, 22: 2, 1999, 40. See also Alex Potts, 'Hybrid sculpture', in *Louise Bourgeois*, New York, 2007.
- 57 Elyse Speaks has argued that the displays 'created a sense of place the characteristics of which were broad and contradictory'. Elyse Speaks, 'Space, gender, sculpture: Bourgeois, Nevelson, and the changing conditions of sculpture in the 1950s', *Women's Studies*, 40: 8, 2011, 1060. Accessed 23 January 2012: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2011.609416>
- 58 Smith made the Forgings when he was a visiting artist in residence at the University of Indiana, Bloomington. Peter Stevens, e-mail to the author, dated 21 October 2010.
- 59 Stephen Melville and Margaret Iversen, 'Plasticity: The Hegelian writing of art', *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures*, Chicago, IL, 2010, 170.
- 60 Melville and Iversen, 'Plasticity: The Hegelian writing of art', 170.
- 61 Smith, 'Sculpture; Art forms in architecture – new techniques affect both' (October 1940), in McCoy, *David Smith*, 44.
- 62 Smith, 'Sculpture; Art forms in architecture – new techniques affect both', 46.
- 63 Smith, 'For the Metropolitan Art Association, Detroit, Michigan' (January 1952), Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 64 Smith, 'Untitled Note', Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 65 Smith, 'The artist and the architect' (November 1957), in McCoy, *David Smith*, 145.
- 66 Smith, 'The artist and the architect', 143.
- 67 Smith, 'On Architecture (Lecture at Pratt Institute)', (7 November 1963), Manuscript Archives, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 68 Smith, Interview with David Sylvester, June 1961, in McCoy, *David Smith*, 168.
- 69 According to Andrew Mitchell, Martin Heidegger expressed doubts about the possibilities of public sculpture in the post-war realm; it was 'complicit with the planned order of industrial society', Mitchell writes. Yet, as Mitchell notes, for Heidegger, 'all sculpture is "public" sculpture', since it is capable of thematizing art's role in a place beyond itself. See Andrew Mitchell, *Heidegger among the Sculptors: Body, Space, and the Art of Dwelling*, Stanford, CA, 2010, 36–9.
- 70 Smith, 'The Secret Letter', 178.
- 71 See Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination*, 162.
- 72 Melville and Iversen, 'Plasticity: The Hegelian writing of art', 170.
- 73 It is a paradox voiced by Theodor Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory*, and described by Alex Potts: 'According to Adorno, the condition of any significant work of modern art is radically split between the promise of autonomy and its existence as social fact. A significant work of art work simultaneously resists incorporation within the fabric of the culture from which it emerges, and itself is part of that fabric.' Potts, 'Autonomy in post-war art, quasi-heroic and casual', *Oxford Art Journal*, 27: 1, 2004, 45.
- 74 Photographs taken by Ernst Scheidegger of Alberto Giacometti's figures in the Swiss landscape repeat these terms by staging sculpture in the familiar space of a walking path.
- 75 Frank O'Hara, 'Letter to David Smith', 17 August, 1961. David Smith Papers, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 76 David Smith, 'Letter to Lois Orswell' (July 1961) as cited in Michael Brenson, 'The fields', in *David Smith: A Centennial*, 45. Smith moved his works to Bolton Landing from his gallery in 1956, having severed all connection with the Willard Gallery and refused bids from other galleries. Writing to a friend, he said, 'if any dealer wants my work, they can buy.' Letter to 'GDT', 3 June 1956. David Smith Papers, The Estate of David Smith, New York.
- 77 As Alex Potts has observed, Smith's sculptures related to their surroundings through a radical separation from it, unlike the sculpture of some later land artists, which pursued a project of marking landscape. See Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination*, 165.